

# PACKER GULCH FIRE SALVAGE TIMBER SALE

December 18, 2006 Land Board

## **Location of Sale:**

- Missoula Unit (SWLO) – Approximately 45 air miles east of Missoula, Montana
- Granite County – Section 36, T12N, R14W
- 100% Common School Trust.

## **Sale Volume & Estimated Value:**

- The estimated volume is 12,536 tons (2,136 MBF) with an estimated minimum value of \$226,902.00.
- Of the 12,536 tons approximately 10,970 tons or 87% is fire salvage resulting from the Packer Gulch Fire which burned during the summer of 2006.
- In addition to the stumpage value, a fee of \$2.77/ton for Forest Improvement will be charged for all merchantable sawlog timber harvested.
- 5.87 tons/MBF is the estimated conversion factor.

## **Sale & Harvest Treatments:**

- The sale consists of 2 harvest units totaling 295 acres.
- Silvicultural prescriptions include 231 acres of fire salvage. Within the fire salvage area, trees that would be likely to survive are reserved from cutting. A minimum of 1 large snag and 1 large snag recruit would also be retained. Large diameter Ponderosa pine would be favored for retention throughout the sale area. Outside the fire perimeter, Douglas-fir would be retained. Live trees that are infected with beetles would be harvested from both units.
- This sale harvests timber in old growth stands. A total of 64 acres of old growth Douglas-fir would be harvested utilizing a shelterwood harvest.

## **Harvest System:**

- 100% tractor

## **Road Construction:**

- Approximately 3.1 miles of new road would be constructed and approximately 2.6 miles of existing private road would be reconstructed. An additional 14 miles of road would be maintained or reconditioned to meet current BMPs. All new roads on state lands would be gated or physically blocked to prevent motorized use once the sale is completed.

## **Public Involvement & Issues:**

- DNRC mailed scoping letters to 40 adjacent landowners and to 7 organizations in September of 2006. A Legal Notice was placed in the *Missoulian* newspaper on September 9-10 and September 16-17, 2006. DNRC specialists were also consulted. Issues raised by the public included new road construction, green tree retention, and conflicts with snowmobilers.

### **Issues and Mitigations:**

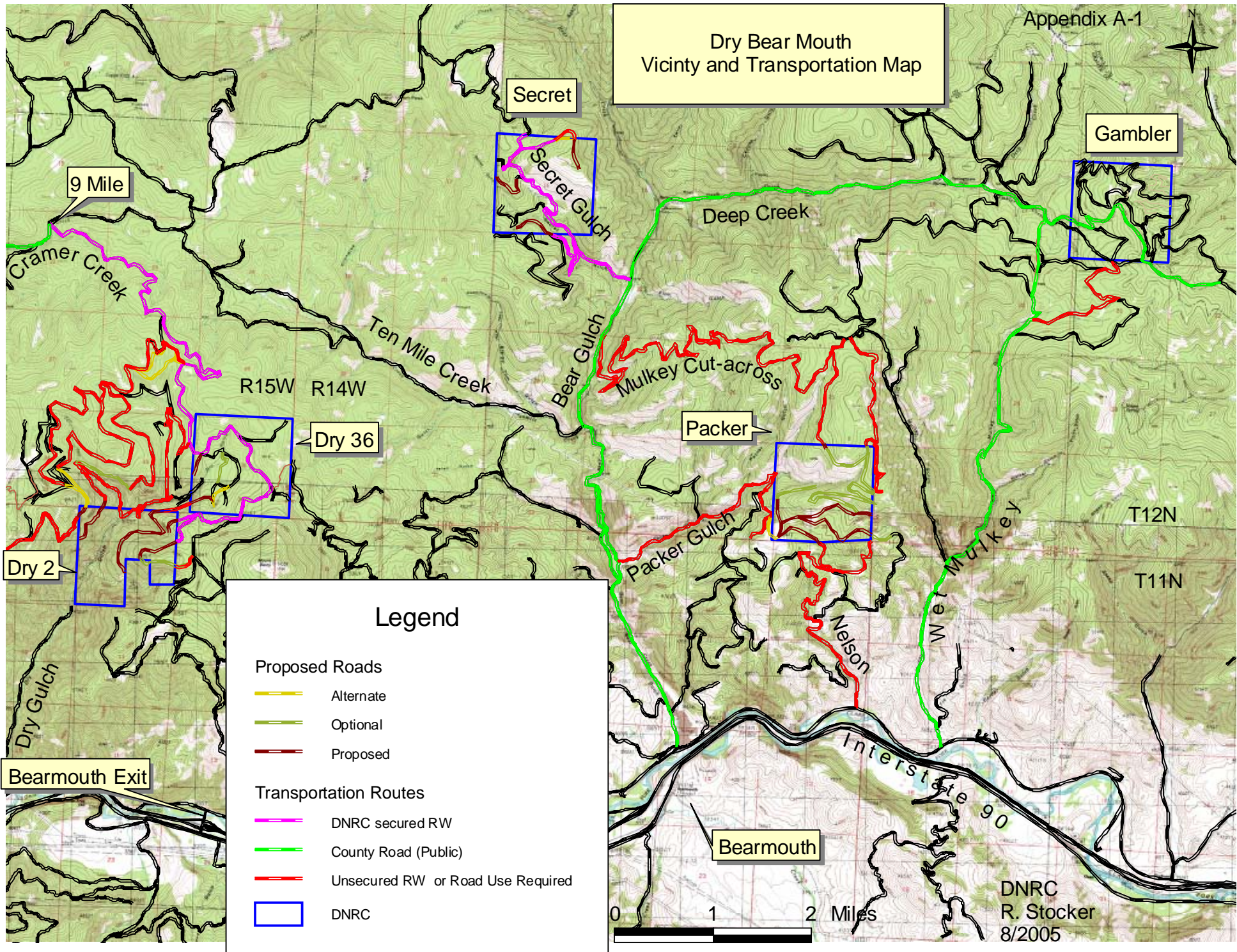
- **Wildlife** – Closing roads within the project area would benefit elk, and potentially grizzly bears and wolves by reducing open road densities. Contract stipulations would state that if Threatened or Endangered (T&E) species are encountered within the sale area, harvest activities would cease until appropriate mitigations could be developed with a DNRC biologist.

Approximately 70 acres of burned habitat would not be harvested to benefit Black-backed woodpeckers, Pileated woodpeckers and Flammulated owls.

- **Streams** – Existing private roads associated with the sale would be upgraded to meet current BMP's. Over the long-term, this would reduce sediment entering local streams.
- **Roads** – Approximately 3.1 miles of new road would be constructed. All new roads would be gated or obstructed after the sale to prohibit motorized access.
- **Old Growth** - 64 acres of old growth Douglas-fir would be treated with a shelterwood harvest by retaining 40-60 sq. ft. of basal area per acre. This will leave a minimum of 8 live trees per acre 21" dbh or larger. While old growth attributes would be reduced post-harvest, this stand would still be classified as old growth due to the retention of sufficient numbers of large, live, old trees. The harvest has been designed to emulate natural disturbances such as a mixed intensity fire or Douglas-fir bark beetle mortality (which is ongoing). The treatment is expected to improve stand vigor and encourage regeneration.
- **Green Tree Retention** - Trees that are likely to survive fire impacts would be retained. A matrix developed by Reichert et al for the US Forest Service was used as a guide to determine which trees had a high probability of surviving. Factors that were rated to determine potential for surviving included: % of scorch on the crown; % of scorch on the bowl; whether the root collar was burned or damaged; and the overall appearance and health of the tree. Trees infested with insects would be harvested.
- **Conflicts with snowmobilers** – The only open roads border the unburned unit. Conflicts would be short term if winter logging of this unit occurred (approximately 70 log truck loads). The road would have warning signs posted notifying snowmobilers of log truck traffic. The green unit does not require winter logging.

**The Director recommends the Land Board direct the Department to sell the Packer Gulch Fire Salvage Timber Sale.**







Packer Gulch Fire Salvage  
Harvest Map  
Section 36, T12N, R14W

